



COLONY OF SEYCHELLES.

ABBREVIATED
ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
MEDICAL and HEALTH
DEPARTMENT

FOR THE YEAR

1942

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Medical Department,
Seychelles, 17th December, 1943.

**Annual Medical and Health Report for the year
ending 31st December, 1942.**

I have the honour to submit for the information of His Excellency the Governor, and for transmission to the Right Honourable the Secretary of State, the Medical Report on the Health and Sanitary conditions of the Seychelles for the year 1942.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant.

C. R. C. RAINSFORD,
Senior Medical Officer.

To

The Hon. Secretary to Government,
Seychelles.

COLONY OF SEYCHELLES.

ABBREVIATED ANNUAL REPORT

On the Medical and Health Department

1st January to 31st December 1942.

I. ADMINISTRATION.

A. STAFF.

Dr. Joseph continued to act as Senior Medical Officer until Dr. Rainsford arrived on secondment from Uganda in October.

Dr. Pai resigned for health reasons in January 1942. It is with regret that we have to report his death in India a few months later. There still remains a vacancy for one Assistant Medical Officer and efforts are being made to find a suitable officer in India. Owing to shortage of medical officers and increased work in Victoria due to war conditions it was not possible to post a doctor at Anse Royale but this district was visited twice weekly.

Mr. Harter continued to work as part time government dentist on his former terms.

B. FINANCE.

HOSPITAL, MEDICAL AND SANITARY REVENUE.

Hospital, Maternity, Mental Hospital Fees	Rs. 12,294
Quarantine Fees	360
Sale of Medicines	1,554 58
Total	Rs. 14,208 58

MEDICAL AND SANITARY EXPENDITURE.

The estimated expenditure for 1942 was :—

Personal Emoluments	Rs. 47,562
Other Charges	56,025
Total	Rs. 103,594

The actual expenditure for 1942 was :—

Personal emolument	Rs. 50,329.08
Other charges	61,573.12
Total	Rs. 111,902.20

Excess expenditure	Rs. 8,208.20
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PUBLIC HEALTH.

The number of cases treated at the Seychelles Hospital and outlying dispensaries was :—

In-patients ; Seychelles Hospital (including Maternity)	2,136
Cottage Hospital do do cases	121
Total	2,257

Out-patients ;	Seychelles Hospital	Anse Royale	Praslin & La Digue
New cases	2,612	1,575	1,419
Re-attendances	3,111	2,870	4,657
Total	8,723	4,445	6,076

I. GENERAL DISEASES.

Anaemia :—There were 467 cases. The different types of anæmia have not been sorted out but the majority are secondary to ankylostomiasis or faulty nutrition.

Diseases of the Respiratory System number 660 including 166 cases of asthma and 25 of pneumonia.

Diseases of the Digestive System ; 2,024 cases were recorded including 290 of hepatitis. Hepatitis is of amoebic origin and in many cases cysts of *Entamoeba histolytica* have been found in the stools.

II. COMMUNICABLE DISEASES.

An unusual feature of the year was the occurrence of three different epidemic diseases—Measles, Mumps and Diphtheria. As noted in the 1941 report, measles broke out in Victoria, Mahé in November 1941. It spread rapidly and early in 1942 had reached epidemic proportions.

The disease also spread to the islands of Praslin and La Digue. By April the epidemic was on the wane in Mahé but continued to rage in Praslin and La Digue for 6 weeks longer. The cases were treated in their own homes. The total figure of 715 cases reported is an under estimate as accurate figures were not kept at the beginning of the epidemic—there must have been several thousand cases in all. Complications met with included bronchitis, pneumonia and cancrum oris and it appears that the original diagnosis of "German measles" (Rubella) must be altered to "Measles" (Morbilli). There were 14 deaths.

Diphtheria : In July 1942 a case of diphtheria was diagnosed on one of the ships lying off Victoria. The contacts were swabbed and showed 4 positives. All were isolated on the ship. As diphtheria had not been reported from the Seychelles for many years an epidemic was feared and stringent precautions were taken. However during August 4 more cases occurred, 3 in Mahé and one on another ship lying in the harbour. These four were at once quarantined on Anonyme Island. All proved to be mild cases and quickly recovered, but two and one contact persistently gave positive throat cultures. Gargles and sulphanilamide powder insufflation were used and one patient cleared up and was discharged. By November the others were still positive so cultures were sent to Nairobi for Virulence test. One was reported as virulent the other as non virulent. The latter was discharged and the former sent away on a Hospital ship. No further cases appeared until the end of December when two of the local inhabitants developed the disease. The rest of the story belongs to 1943 but it can be stated that no serious epidemic has occurred.

Mumps : Mumps made its appearance in October 1942 and spread rapidly. By the end of the year 125 cases had been seen at the Hospital. The disease ran its usual course and calls for no special comment.

Amoebic Dysentery : There were 257 cases while dysentery due to *Balantidium Coli* numbered 18 against 1 in 1941.

Helminthic Diseases : Infections with hook-worm and round worms, are very common—the latter especially causes much ill health amongst children.

Veneral Diseases : 132 cases of syphilis and 130 of gonorrhoea, not including later complications, were treated at the clinics throughout the Colony. These diseases are on the increase. Irregular attendances still hamper treatment but some improvement has been noted in this respect.

Leprosy The female lepers were moved from Round Island to their new home on Curieuse island in December 1942. There the buildings which are pleasantly situated, are of masonry with thatched roofs. Unfortunately it has not yet been possible to obtain the Religious Sisters for work amongst the lepers. Their help is badly needed as much remains to be done in the way of organising work and recreation for the inmates.

The number of lepers in the Colony in December 1942 is as follows :—

In Curieuse	54
In home isolation	23
Total	77

SCHOOL HYGIENE.

Schools in North Mahé were inspected by a Medical Officer and a definite improvement noted in both personal and general hygiene.

The Dental Surgeon who pays periodic visits to the schools is trying to push the teaching and practice of dental hygiene as he has noticed a fairly high incidence of dental caries amongst the pupils.

Shortage of Medical Staff prevented any inspection from being carried out in South Mahé.

MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE WORK.

There were 2,135 attendances at the child welfare clinic and 286 expectant mothers came to the ante-natal clinic for advice and treatment. 360 women were admitted to the maternity section of the Seychelles Hospital where 251 living babies were born.

There were 12 still-births and two maternal deaths.

In the maternity ward at Praslin 35 healthy babies were born and there were 2 still-births.

DENTAL CLINIC.

The following work was carried out:—

1. Schools

Extractions 736, fillings 123, scalings 3.

2. Public dental service.

Extractions 1,400.

LABORATORY.

Summary of work done:—

Urine examinations	1,344
Faeces	283
Sputum	52
Examination of swabs and smears	273
Throat cultures	96
Blood films examined	38
Kahn tests	262
Miscellaneous	7
Total	2,355

X-RAY DEPARTMENT.

Summary of work done:

Radioscopy	20
Radiography	43
Ultra Violet therapy	39

TRAINING OF LOCAL PERSONNEL.

During the year 4 probationer nurses, 2 pupil midwives and 1 Probationer Sanitary Inspector joined the department. Some difficulty was experienced in obtaining suitable candidates.

PRISONS.

Health of the prisoners was satisfactory. No case of deficiency disease occurred.

MENTAL HOSPITAL ANSE ROYALE.

Number remaining from 1941	35
Admitted during 1942	8
Died	1
Discharged cured	2
Remaining	40

PAUPER ASYLUM FIENNES INSTITUTE.

Daily average number of inmates was 88, there were 33 deaths.

SPECIAL WORK RELATED TO THE WAR.

Although the Seychelles Islands have remained outside the immediate war zone yet a considerable number of men for the services have either called here or have been stationed here for longer or shorter periods.

An Indian Assistant Surgeon is stationed here attached to the Indian Garrison Troops but the rest of the medical work was done by civilian medical staff.

Dr Christianson was appointed consultant Medical Officer to the Army and receives a special allowance (paid by the Seychelles Government) for the extra work entailed.

The Tubercular Ward (12 beds) situated at the back of the Seychelles Hospital was turned into a military ward for the use of Indian troops.

Naval Officers and ratings have been treated in the general hospital or as private patients at the doctor's consulting room. The great majority came to hospital.

The R. A. F. paid Dr Christianson a monthly fee to look after their personnel.

The health of all three services has been very good. Venereal diseases especially gonorrhoea was common amongst naval ratings, much less common amongst the soldiers (due probably to strict disciplinary measures).

The local Pioneers too received necessary medical attention from members of the department, either at the hospital or in camp. They kept very healthy, apart from gonorrhoea although a few cases of Vitamin B2 deficiency disease were encountered.

In an attempt to reduce the V. D. incidence Government prohibited young unmarried women from renting rooms in Victoria Township, and certain drinking houses were placed out of bounds. It is doubtful if these measures have had much effect. Supplies of M. & B. 693 were adequate and all cases were treated with this drug. Results were good although a number of resistant cases were met with.

C. R. C. RAINSFORD,
Senior Medical Officer.

Diseases and Deaths by Groups Classified in accordance with Manual of International List of causes of deaths 1938 Edition.

	Seychelles Hospital.			Anse Royale Out-patient.	Praslin and La Digue.		
	In-patient.	Deaths.	Out-Patient.		In-patient.	Deaths.	Out-patient.
I. Infective and parasitic diseases	318	4	508	401	2	...	320
II. Cancer and Other Tumours	12	1	2	1	1	...	6
III. Rheumatism etc.	29	1	78	90	...	...	9
IV. Diseases of Blood etc.	9	3	377	135	...	...	46
V. Chronic Poisoning and Intoxication	4	1	...	...	1	...	1
VI. Diseases of the Nervous System	66	4	75	52	8	1	110
VII. Diseases of the Circulatory System	39	4	20	41	1	...	20
VIII. Diseases of the Respiratory System	176	3	248	176	1	...	67
IX. Diseases of the Digestive System	534	10	647	291	14	...	393
X. Diseases of the Urinary and Genital Systems (Non-Venereal)	110	...	141	55	12	1	58
XI. Diseases of Pregnancy	43	2	1	...	8	...	...
XII. Diseases of the Skin	293	...	187	110	16	...	166
XIII. Diseases of the Bones	20	...	23	13	3	...	88
XIV. Congenital Malformations	1	...	...	...	...	...	...
XV. Diseases peculiar to 1st year	1	...	4	11	...	...	21
XVI. Senility and Old Age	3	...	156	49	...	...	...
XVII. Violence	144	1	69	82	15	...	71
XVIII. Ill Defined Causes	16	1	76	68	2	...	43
Total	1818	35	2612	1575	84	2	1419

